



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA STATE TREASURER PHIL ANGELIDES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 25, 2006

Contact: Mike Roth (916) 653-5126
Nick Papas (916) 651-6088

SENIOR AND DISABLED ADVOCATES, CALIFORNIA STATE TREASURER ANGELIDES CALL ON GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER TO ABANDON PLANS TO POCKET \$223 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDS OWED TO NEEDY AGED, BLIND AND DISABLED CALIFORNIANS

Treasurer Says Governor's Decision to Take Money from Neediest Californians is "Unconscionable"

SACRAMENTO, CA – Advocates for senior citizens and disabled Californians, joined today by California State Treasurer Phil Angelides, called on Governor Schwarzenegger to abandon his plan to pocket \$223 million in federal funds owed to needy aged, blind and disabled Californians.

As part of the budget plan he released in January, Schwarzenegger proposed that the State keep over \$223 million in federal cost of living increases for low-income seniors and people with disabilities who receive aid through the Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) Program over two years. Over 1.2 million elderly, blind and disabled Californians receive SSI/SSP payments each month to help them meet their most basic living expenses. Governor Schwarzenegger's plan will mean that aged recipients with an average monthly payment of \$836 will lose \$16 per month that they would otherwise receive from the federal cost of living increase.

"It is unconscionable that this Governor would propose pocketing money that California's neediest residents are counting on to pay their rent, buy groceries, and keep the heat on in the winter – while he hasn't had the courage to close one special-interest, corporate tax loophole," said Treasurer Angelides.

SSI/SSP recipients include the elderly, blind, and people with disabilities who meet strict income limits and have very few personal assets. Recipients were slated to receive cost of living increases from the federal government early this year; last year's state budget delayed that increase for three months. Governor Schwarzenegger is again proposing to delay a January 2007 increase until July 2008.

"Countless seniors and Californians with disabilities are struggling just to get by and Governor Schwarzenegger wants to make it even harder," said Frances Gracechild, Executive Director of Resources for Independent Living in Sacramento, which assists people with disabilities in transitioning to living in the community. "The Governor should abandon this destructive proposal."

The group pointed out that while SSI/SSP recipients receive barely enough money to pay for life's essentials, \$16 dollars received from the federal cost of living increase they are owed would enable them to buy four loaves of bread and four quarts of milk each month.

###